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WRITING MATTERS

DEVELOPING WRITING SKILLS IN STUDENTS OF ALL AGES

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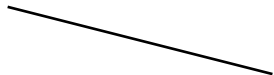
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INTRODUCTION

Writing coherent paragraphs and essays involves engaging in a number of activities simultaneously:

- motor component: whether students print, write in cursive, or type an assignment, part of the brain is engaged in this process.
- spelling: even if students are not penalized for spelling, they must still sound out and spell the words they choose so that the reader can understand what is being written.
- syntax (sentence construction): students must write coherent sentences, including appropriate variety, structure, and punctuation.
- vocabulary: students must use words that convey intended message and vary those words to reflect the development of ideas
- text structure (paragraph/essay): students must apply what they have learned regarding introductory, supporting, and concluding sentences/paragraphs.
- recursive processes (planning/ revising/ editing): students must proofread and edit their work, taking into account conventions of spelling, punctuation, sentence construction, and idea development.
- content: topics chosen from students' own experiences contain the most simple and direct content; eventually, students must write on topics assigned by content-area teachers.
- audience: students must determine the purpose of the assignment, the intended audience, and the approach to be taken in order to match written piece with intended audience.

The skills included in this scope and sequence involve knowledge in four stages. A student has achieved "mastery" only when he/she is able to engage with the concept at all four stages.

Stages of Knowledge	Idea Generation	Parts of Speech	Sentence Parts	Paragraph/ Essay Parts
Definition		learn definition	learn definition	ability to discuss
Identification		recognize in text	recognize in text	recognize in text
Create in Isolation	generate/ categorize list	provide examples in isolated sentences	provide examples in isolated sentences	create using known topic
Create in Application	generate/ categorize list for content-based assignment	use in paragraphs	use in paragraphs	create using content-based topic

FORMING WORDS – CURSIVE

As Diana Hanbury King writes in *Writing Skills For The Adolescent*, “There is no reason why cursive writing should not be taught to all students. However, in the case of dyslexics, there are several reasons for insisting on cursive. To begin with, in cursive writing there is no question as to where each letter begins -- it begins on the line. The confusion with forms is not merely a left and right reversal as with b/d and p/q; it is also an up and down reversal as with m/w and u/n; hence the uncertainty as to whether a letter begins at the top or the bottom. Second, spelling is fixed more firmly in the mind if the word is formed in a continuous movement rather than a series of separate strokes with the pencil lifted off the paper between each one” (King).

In short:

- cuts down on reversals (cursive b/d, m/w, etc.)
- in a proper lowercase cursive alphabet, all letters begin on the baseline
- spelling is better reinforced in the mind if the continuous movement of cursive is used
- reading is strengthened through writing
- forces appropriate clustering of letters to create words and spacing between words

HANDWRITING TIPS:

William Van Cleave

I. Body:

- A. feet flat
- B. back straight
- C. both arms on table (including elbows)

II. Paper Position:

- A. paper tilted at 45 degrees
- B. corner folded if necessary

III. Hands & Grip:

- A. fingers should be in triangular position - thumb and first finger squeeze pencil while middle finger acts as bridge for pencil
- B. index finger's pad should be pressed against the pencil
- C. pencil should rest on the arch between thumb and first finger, and eraser should point over shoulder
- D. wrist should be flat on table
- E. other hand should be on top of paper to pull paper up (so writing hand doesn't have to move down)
- F. arm should arc across page as student writes (instead of wrist flipping back and forth)

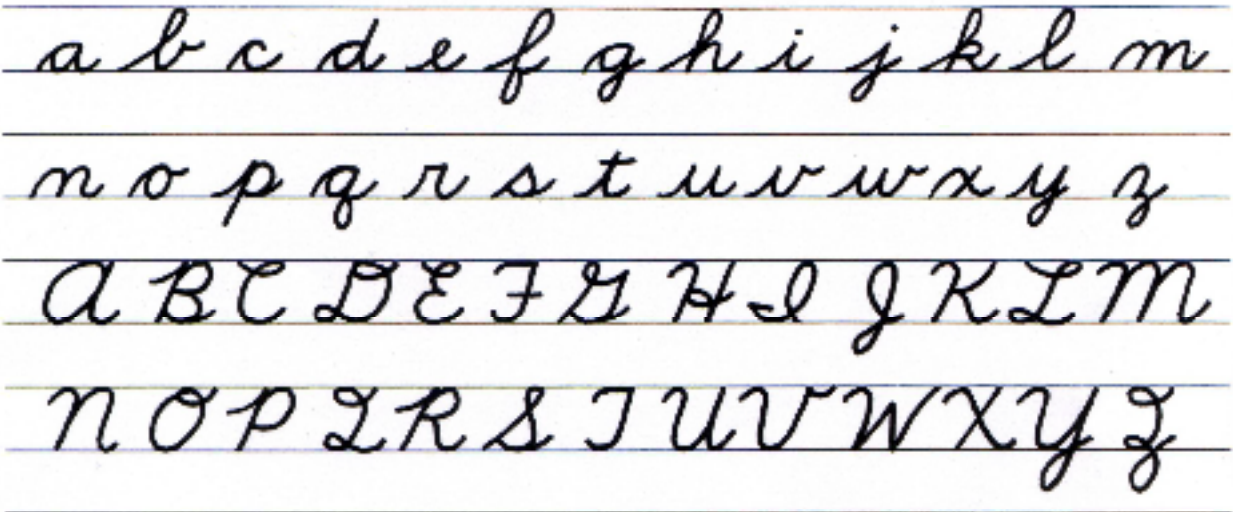
IV. Script:

- A. every lower case letter begins on the line
- B. letters should be taught in groups by formation

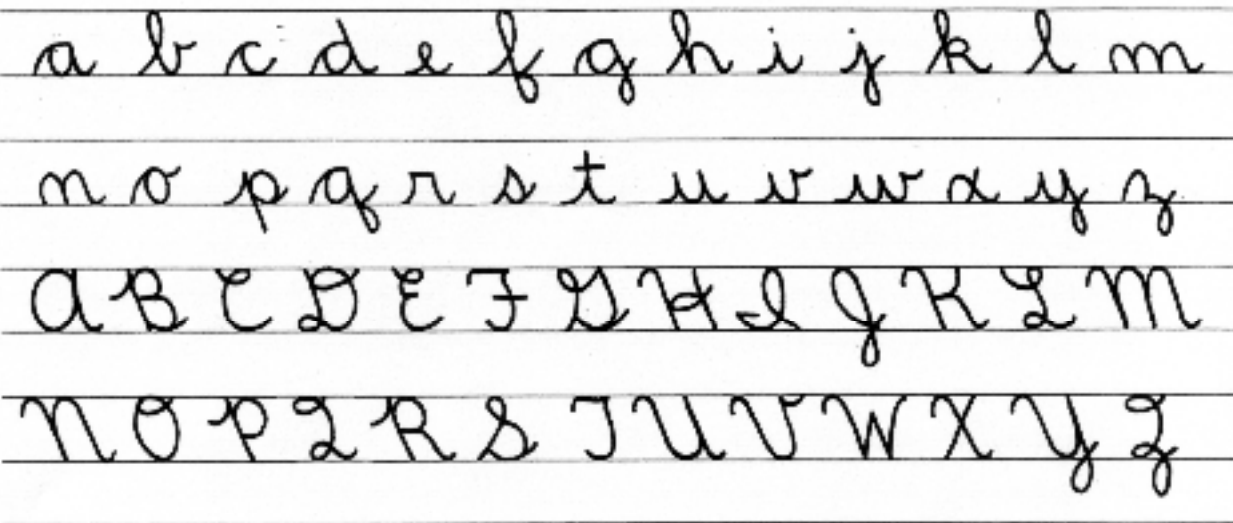
GILLINGHAM-BASED ALPHABETS

(Diana Hanbury King's fonts)

right-handed alphabets:



left-handed alphabets:



GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION

Keep two things in mind:

- We teach grammar to improve writing. If you cannot justify teaching a particular concept in terms of improving a student's writing, don't teach it.
- The best grammar exercises involve students writing sentences containing/practicing various grammatical concepts.

Parts of Speech: Consider the job the word does in the sentence.

• noun	person, place, thing, (idea)	John, school, bench, (peace)
• verb	action word (linking, helping)	jump, (am, seem)
• pronoun	word that takes the place of noun	he, you, they, I
• adjective	describes a noun (or pronoun)	ugly, tired
• adverb	describes a verb (adjective, or other adverb)	quickly
• preposition	begins a phrase (anything a plane can do to a cloud)	in, on, around
• conjunction	joins 2 words or 2 groups of words	and, although
• article	teach in adjective family	a, an, the
• interjection	expresses emotion - inessential	whoa!

Sentence Parts: Clauses are the building blocks to all sentence writing.

subject	what's doing the action	<u>John</u> went to the store.
predicate	verb plus its baggage	John <u>went to the store</u> .
direct object	receives action of verb	John threw Mark the <u>ball</u> .
indirect object	tells to whom/for whom action is done	John threw <u>Mark</u> the ball.
predicate noun	follows linking verb and renames subject	John is a <u>pilot</u> .
predicate adjective	follows linking verb and describes subject	John seems <u>exhausted</u> .
clause	group of words with subject and predicate	John went to the store because she is finished
independent clause	clause that can stand by itself	John went to the store
dependent clause	clause that cannot stand by itself	because she is finished
simple sentence	one independent clause	John went to the store.
compound sentence	2 independent clauses joined by , and for, and, nor, but, or, yet or 2 independent clauses joined by ;	John went to the store, but it was closed. John went to the store; it was closed.
complex sentence	1 independent clause and 1 or more dependent clauses	John went to the store because he needed milk. When John went to the store, he forgot his wallet. John, who was selected as our leader, rarely smiled.

Five-Point Instructional Strategy

New Concept

- a. **Teacher introduces concept and then asks students to explain it, proving understanding.** In most instances, introducing a part of speech or sentence part to your students should take just a few minutes. Students should create (or you should provide) a vocabulary card with term on front, definition and examples on back; explain the term and its definition; and have them explain it back to you or, in the case of large group instruction, to each other. Students can illustrate their cards as well.

Review Concept

- a. **Students explain concept, proving understanding.** The emphasis here is on information your students have learned and can share. With most concepts this will take only a few minutes. Students should begin by verbalizing what they know from memory and then use the concept vocabulary card to elaborate on their understanding.

- b. **Students identify examples of the concept in context.** Have students sort words, sentence parts, or sentences to help them recognize the concept you are teaching. Have them identify examples of the studied element in a larger context. Professionally written sentences, from both textbooks and good literature, sometimes serve this purpose well and also offer material for further discussion.

- c. **Students create their own examples in isolation.** Students must focus primary attention on creating examples of the concept, in isolation and in applied context. Keep the emphasis on student-generated work.

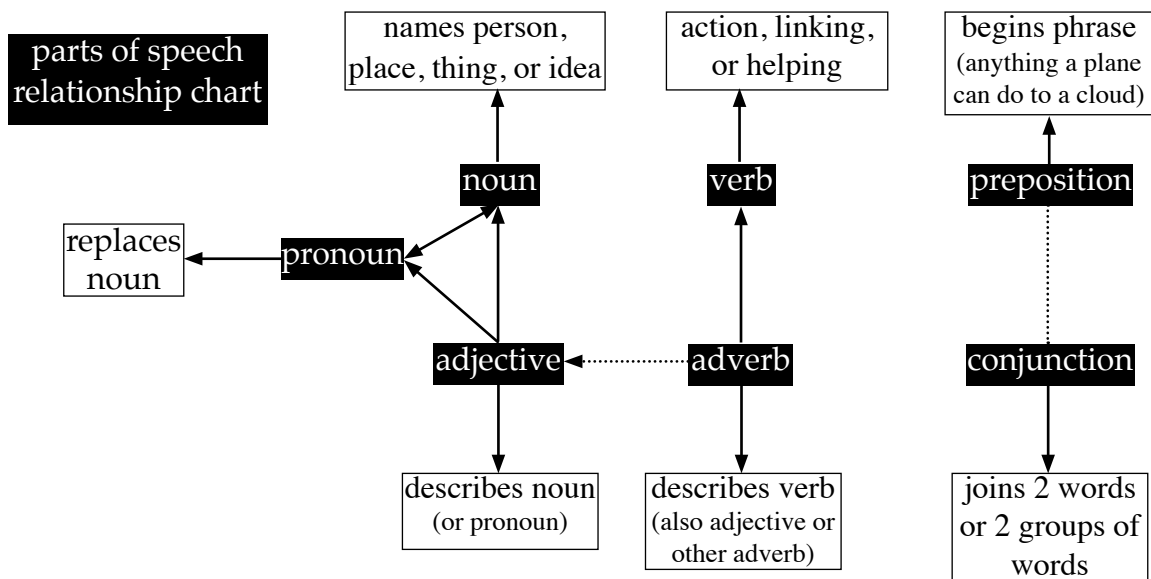
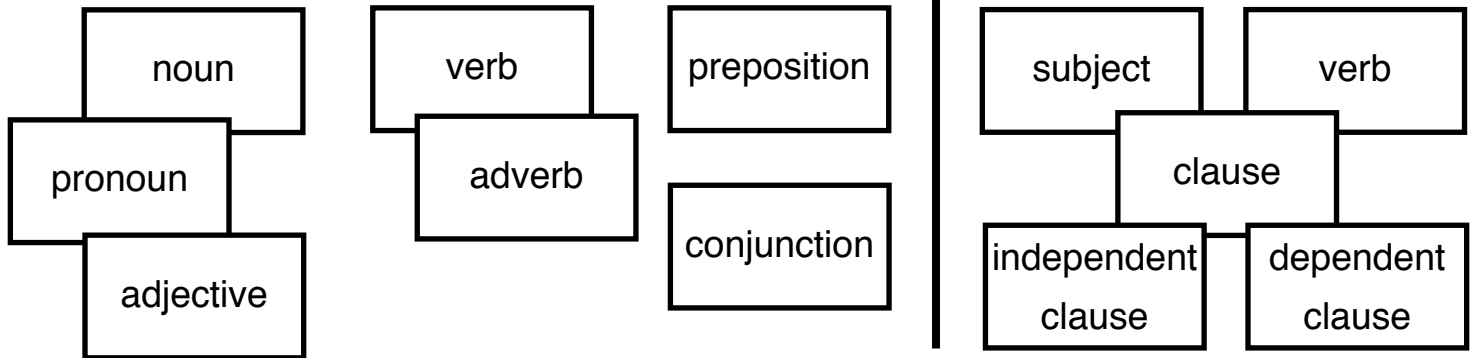
- d. **Students share their examples with the instructor and their classmates.** When the students complete independent practice of a concept at their desks, always allow time to share results. This (a) validates the students' writing, (b) encourages them to write at a more sophisticated level since they anticipate an audience, (c) allows the instructor to check for competence, and (d) provides student-generated examples (whether correct or not) for further discussion and analysis.

- e. **Teacher uses examples, both correct and incorrect, for clarification and further instruction.** As the students share, the teacher writes any incorrect examples as well as any examples that show a new or interesting development that warrants discussion. Since the examples come from the students' own writing on the day in question, the teacher is able to target student difficulties immediately and strengthen class understanding. Using student examples rather than prefabricated, professionally written sentences connects students to the assignment, provides immediacy and relevance, and gives the teacher valuable information about where the students are and what they need next in order to further their writing.

PARTS OF SPEECH INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

Noun	Classroom Naming/Labeling Nature/Street Walk Categorization	
Verb	Classroom Naming/Labeling Nature/Street Walk Conjugation Yesterday/Today/Tomorrow	
Pronoun	Family Tree	
Adjective	Classroom Naming Object Description Coloring/Counting Sense Exploration	
Adverb	Verb Description	
Preposition	Chair/Student Plane/Cloud Paper/Words	
Conjunction	Plus Sign Humans Holding Hands Walk/Direction	

Displaying grammar vocabulary cards: Use grammar vocabulary cards for instruction. Display your cards using the layout below, and have the students organize them similarly until they are able to do so independently. Doing so will help students understand the relationships between parts of speech and sentence parts as they learn to recognize examples in context.



taken from Van Cleave's *Writing Matters: Developing Sentence Skills in Students of All Ages*
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Sample Worksheet Ideas

(whole worksheets for each part of speech can be created from each section)

Adjective Activity Ideas

An adjective describes a noun: *ugly duckling* *red baron*

I. Write a sentence using both of the adjectives listed:

green, three million

More Adjective Activity Ideas

adjective	word that describes a noun	<i>ugly</i> duckling <i>difficult</i> problem
-----------	----------------------------	--

examples original, disappointing, three, red, overdone, charismatic, hideous,
beautiful, rotten, intelligent, creative, voracious, enlightened, shy,
considerate, pleasant, whispering, icy, enormous, sly

II. Write an appropriate adjective in each blank:

The _____ man and the _____ woman went to the
_____ mall. While there, they saw some _____
puppies in the pet store, ate at a _____ restaurant in the food court,
and bought several _____ pieces of clothing. On their way out, they
saw several _____ children listening to their iPods. Overall, the
man and the woman had a _____ day.

III. Write an appropriate adjective in each blank:

_____ tree	_____ day
_____ car	_____ school

IV. Create a sentence that includes at least two adjectives:

V. Rewrite each sentence with at least two adjectives inserted into it:

e.g.,: The boy likes ice cream.

The tall boy likes vanilla ice cream.

The man went to the store.

The forest burned to the ground and left nothing but ashes.

VI. Make a list of adjectives that describe the nouns below:

_____ hat

_____ teacher

Adverb Activity Ideas

An adverb describes a verb:

run *rapidly*

jump *quickly*

I. Put an appropriate adverb after each verb below:

understand _____

laugh _____

sleep _____

sit _____

murmur _____

fumble _____

stab _____

eat _____

II. Sort the following adverbs into appropriate columns:

carefully

rapidly

soon

there

closer

out

loudly

punctually

now

quietly

rudely

down

how

when

where

III. Rewrite each sentence with at least one adverb in it:

e.g.,: The boy ate in the kitchen.

The boy ate quickly in the kitchen.

Julie played in the sandbox.

Verb Activities at the Word Level

I. Verb Tense (Conjugate verbs to practice number and tense usage.):

verb: _____

I	_____	we	_____
you	_____	you	_____
he/she/it	_____	they	_____

verb: _____

	yesterday (past tense)	today (present tense)	tomorrow (future tense)
I	_____	_____	_____
you	_____	_____	_____
he/she/it	_____	_____	_____
we	_____	_____	_____
you	_____	_____	_____
they	_____	_____	_____

II. Write a sentence using the verb(s) listed. You may change the tense of any verb as you see fit:

trade

eat, drink

defend, protect

Other Activities at the Word Level

III. Identify the part of speech of the underlined word in each sentence:

- _____ 1. Robert gathered his tools and left the construction site.
- _____ 2. Over three thousand New Yorkers ran in the marathon.
- _____ 3. The blue handkerchief was found under the table.
- _____ 4. The child cried continuously when he fell off the slide.
- _____ 5. My grandmother lived down the road from me.
- _____ 6. I liked it when my baby-sitter took me out for ice cream.
- _____ 7. Fred and Ethel were married for over three decades.

IV. Noun Expander (*download this and other grammar charts in full color from wvcedconsulting.com*):

adjective

common noun

prepositional (adjective) phrase

<i>ugly</i>	<i>toad</i>	<i>on the mossy rock</i>

V. Replace tired words. (Prevent students from repeating the same, boring words by helping them generate other words to replace stale and overused ones. A few examples follow; the answers are written at right.

Instead of...

...use (students generate these words as you write them)...

small

tiny, little, miniscule, almost invisible, minor, unimportant, petite, insignificant, trivial

very ugly
(good for "very"
in many places)

gross, disgusting, hideous, heinous, homely, unattractive, grotesque, repulsive, crabby, cross, grumpy, nasty

fun

*entertaining, amazing, wonderful, terrific, entertaining
engaging, super, diverting, absorbing, charming, delightful,
fascinating, pleasing, pleasant*

SENTENCE DEVELOPING ACTIVITIES

As your students develop an understanding of parts of speech and sentence parts, here are some activities designed to improve writing at the sentence level. Independent sentence writing (#8) is the goal.

1. Sentence matching
 - join sentence parts to make sentences: match pre-written subjects and predicates (2 column) or subjects, simple verbs, and objects (3 column)
2. Sentence unscrambling
 - unscramble sentence chunks to make logical sentences
3. Sentence imitating
 - write a sentence similar in structure to a provided model
4. Sentence combining
 - in activities/exercises & your own writing:
 - provide 2-4 sentences and ask student to combine
 - provide 2 sentences and a clue and ask student to combine
 - provide one sentence and one element to embed into it
5. Expanding sentences using bare bones sentence expanders
 - provide simple subject and verb and use questioning to prompt sentence expansion (e.g., John ate. when? where? why? how?)
 - provide simplistic sentence with nouns, verbs, and phrases and ask student to add adjectives and adverbs
6. Tandem writing
 - student writes first half of sentence, trades papers with a classmate, and finishes classmate's sentence (subject to predicate or first clause to second clause)
7. Writing sentences from prompts
 - "begin a sentence with the word _____" (sub. conj., transition word, etc.)
 - "write a sentence that contains _____" (sub. conj., prep., noun, etc.)
 - provide student with first sentence and transition word that is to begin second sentence
8. Sentence writing
 - as a class starter
 - for class work and homework, even instead of paragraph writing

COMMON SENTENCE TEMPLATES

clause: group of words with a subject and its verb

independent clause: clause that can stand by itself

dependent clause: clause that cannot stand by itself

Simple Sentence 1 independent clause

I

Many have a single subject and predicate.

Mac went to the store.

On Tuesday Will visited our grandmother at her cottage in the next town.

Others have compound subjects and/or predicates.

Wes and Ethan often play tennis on Saturdays.

Logan saw an excellent movie and then went to dinner with friends.

(For a group of words to be a clause, it must have its own subject and predicate. It cannot share either with another clause.)

Compound Sentence 2 independent clauses

I, I; I
for and nor but or yet

joined by comma and coordinating conjunction...

Jackson went to the store, but it was closed.

Tickets for the final game were scarce, yet Drew still got seats.

I love to jog through the park, and Isabelle often joins me.

I do not want to go to the movies, nor do I feel like playing baseball.

...or joined by a semi-colon.

A number of recent inventions have changed the way the world functions; cell phones and the internet are two of the most obvious.

The game got rained out; however, the coaches rescheduled it for the following Saturday.

(Words such as however are conjunctive adverbs rather than conjunctions; these adverbs often begin the second clause of a compound sentence that uses a semi-colon and are always followed by a comma.)

Complex Sentence 1 independent and 1 (or more) dependent clauses

D, I ID I
D

using subordinating conjunction...

While Rob was pulling out of his driveway, he accidentally bumped into another car. (D,I)
Even though the movie ran late, Charles still got in before curfew. (D,I)

Luke spent an extra \$50 on his computer because it came with a printer. (ID)
Our mom banned drinks in the den after Jeb spilled soda on the good table. (ID)

...or using relative pronoun.

Taylor, who has played competitive sports since fourth grade, started at free safety this fall.
Jack loved any book that could hold his attention.

(The first of these adjective clause (or D-wedge) sentences uses the clause to define the subject. The second uses it to define the object.)

Clause/Phrase Activities

Clauses are the key building blocks of all sentences we write. The ability to identify and create them is essential. Mark each group of words below as P (phrase) or C (clause):

- | | |
|--|---|
| _____ if the rain never stops | _____ when the manager organizes the team |
| _____ for breakfast | _____ through the woods by the river |
| _____ under the window | _____ the party ended at midnight |
| _____ since I slept | _____ as long as you study before the game |
| _____ beside the grocery store | _____ if I finish the book |
| _____ before she finished the pie | _____ as soon as the painter finished |
| _____ as soon as the temperature drops | _____ when the exercise was over |
| _____ because Mike could drive | _____ at the end of the long road |
| _____ if we see another ant | _____ beneath the deep blue sea |
| _____ after careful consideration | _____ we both finished eating breakfast in time |
| _____ between two slices of bread | _____ because of the number of boxes |
| _____ since yesterday | _____ though I gave you three warnings |
| _____ until you hear back from me | _____ until I receive your donation |

All the groups of words below are clauses. Identify each as I (independent or main) or D (dependent or subordinate):

- | | |
|---|--|
| _____ Constantine joined the sports club | _____ whenever we have a chance to play golf |
| _____ since Abraham Lincoln was elected | _____ before I will clean out the closet |
| _____ school lets out in June | _____ if T.V. remained black and white |
| _____ the play begins at 9 a.m. | _____ my family is coming for the holidays |
| _____ after we purchased the new car | _____ the doe was brown with a white tail |
| _____ if we can handle the time change | _____ cleats were left on the radiator to dry |
| _____ we ate the purple potato chips | _____ although asparagus is out of season |
| _____ water is the most healthy drink | _____ the black panther pounced at the crowd |
| _____ if my migraine doesn't linger | _____ when the strawberries arrived |
| _____ as long as the schedule will be kept | _____ before I considered my sister's request |
| _____ if I worry too much about the trip | _____ where our cousins live |
| _____ the postal carrier delivered the mail | _____ whenever the detective catches the crook |

SENTENCE PART MATCHING – SUBJECT-PREDICATE

Subject

Predicate

The little boy with dimples

landed on the feeder in our yard.

A chirping blue jay

smiled at the doctor's offer of candy.

My grandmother

used to bake me cookies each weekend.

A couple of teenagers

wore his uniform with pride.

The soldier, a veteran of two wars,

eats dinner together each night.

My entire family

broke into my dad's car.

A swarming nest of bees

caused the family to leave the picnic early.

A pair of monarch butterflies

awkwardly bent down to reach the pond.

Two long-legged giraffes

fluttered near me on my Saturday walk.

SENTENCE PART MATCHING – SUBJECT-VERB-OBJECT

Subject

Verb

Object

The good boy

accidentally smashed

her sister on the head.

The mean girl

angrily smacked

the woman with her bags.

The rowdy kids

kindly helped

the antique vase.

The sick child

announced

two bowls of chicken soup.

The general

ate

his troops to march.

The president

ordered

a new plan for his country.

The driver

painted

twelve patients yesterday.

My doctor

saw

his friends through the city.

An artist

raced

that ugly baby portrait.

SENTENCE COMBINING

- I. Make each pair of sentences into a compound sentence using the provided keyword:

We could go to the movies. Marcia could go alone. (or)

The new video game hit stores yesterday. We were the first ones to get it. (and)

- II. Make each pair of sentences into a compound sentence. Use a conjunction:

The test was yesterday. I did not prepare enough.

Two rivers surrounded the town. There was still not enough water to drink.

- III. Make each pair of sentences into a complex sentence using the provided keyword:

It was raining hard. We did not go outside. (because)

We were driving. Another car hit our fender. (while)

She was a good teacher. She yelled a lot. (although)

- IV. Make each pair of sentences into a complex sentence. (Use a subordinating conjunction.):

We save enough money. We will get a new game system.

We went to the movies. They decided to go bowling.

You do your homework. You will pass every test.

- V. Combine into one sentence. Do not leave out any information:

The movie was excellent. It ran quite late. It starred Denzel Washington.

We were hungry. We went to my favorite restaurant. I ordered a burger and fries.

My cousins are from Australia. They visited us last month. We had a blast.

OTHER SENTENCE BUILDING ACTIVITIES

I. Develop these verbs using adverbs, phrases, and clauses:

verb:	jumped	shouted
adverb:	quickly	_____
adverb phrase:	through the hoop	_____
adverb clause:	when we heard the loud noise	_____

II. Finish these sentences (good to explore complex to younger students):

I love weekends because _____.

John finished the quiz before _____.

We went to the movies while _____.

III. Prepositional Phrase Placement: Put a ^ in each spot where the given prepositional phrase could be placed. (This can also be done by giving students in a group setting their own cards, each with a word on it, and having them sort themselves into a logical sentence. An additional student, armed with the phrase, can stand in various places along the sentence's route where the phrase could logically be inserted):

1. The angry troll gobbled the mischievous children. under the bridge
2. The doctor prepared for a difficult surgery. in the operating room
3. My friend came to stay with me. over the weekend

IV. Write each sentence two ways, one beginning with the dependent clause and the other ending with it. Be careful to use a comma when necessary.

1. my friend gave me a present because she is a nice person
version a: _____

version b: _____

2. I moved the boxes into the garage when my brother agreed to help
version a: _____

version b: _____

BASIC SUBJECT-VERB BAREBONES SENTENCES FOR EXPANSION

I laughed.	The athlete cycled.	His ship landed.
You should eat.	The basement floods.	A rocket launched.
It rained.	The students groaned.	The children played.
We slept.	The worker hammered.	The musician practiced.
The chef baked.	The outlaw hanged.	They skied.
The actors bowed.	The farmer hunts.	The minivan stopped.
Grandpa called.	The warrior was injured.	My guinea pig squeaked.
The hikers will camp.	The woman jogs.	The cook stirred.
The audience clapped.	The clown will juggle.	The brat tripped.
The boats crashed.	The boy jumped.	My cousins will visit.

ADVANCED SUBJECT-VERB BAREBONES SENTENCES FOR EXPANSION

Sue will answer.	The fire glowed.	The orchestra performed.
Juan apologized.	The day improved.	Meryl pretended.
My brother argues.	One soldier lasted.	James refused.
The flight was delayed.	The ice melted.	The couple relaxed.
We were embarrassed.	Marsha observed.	One cupcake remains.
My niece was frightened.	Luke offered.	I remember.
A crowd gathered.	The boys will promise.	The mourners wailed.

BASIC SUBJECT-VERB-OBJECT SENTENCES FOR EXPANSION

The teen could afford the car.	Her partner served the ball.
We amused ourselves.	The lifeguard shaded his eyes.
Dad will carve the turkey.	The kids smashed the pumpkins.
Sue combs her hair.	Dad supplied the snacks.
The waitress filled our glasses.	Our grandparents surprised us.
The child glued the pieces.	The pro tamed the lion.
I grabbed your coat.	We tasted all the cakes.
The farmer milked the cow.	My grandmother tires easily.
My sister remembers everything.	The truck towed my car.
We should remove our shoes.	My daughter tugged on my shirt.
Susie scraped her knee.	My son will unlock the door.

ADVANCED SUBJECT-VERB-OBJECT BAREBONES SENTENCES FOR EXPANSION

The owner accepted the offer.	She dislikes him.
We admired the monument.	He still had hope.
The secretary advised the president.	The actress will impress you.
A scientist analyzes results.	The bear intended no harm.
Three schools banned the book.	She invented a cure.
We will collect donations.	The leader signaled his troops.
Liz contained her anger.	The heat tests her patience.

SENTENCE EXPANSION EXAMPLES – ADVERBIAL (WORDS, PHRASES, AND CLAUSES)

I laughed. when?

Daily, I laughed.
I often laughed.
I rarely laughed.
I laughed recently.
Sometimes, I laughed.
Today, I laughed.
Usually, I laughed.
I never laughed.
I laughed yesterday.
After dinner, I laughed.

I laughed through the night.
I laughed as she was falling.
I laughed as long as I could.
Once I understood the joke, I laughed.
I laughed till tears came to my eyes.
Until she stopped making jokes, I laughed.
I laughed when I saw my sister's costume.
I laughed whenever my cousin sneezed.
While I was eating, I laughed.
I laughed before her show.

You should eat. where?

You should eat nearby.
You should eat outside.
You should eat near your family.
You should eat across the room.
You should eat around the corner.
At the party you should eat.
You should eat behind the stage.
You should eat below the falls.
You should eat beneath the tent.
You should eat beside me.
You should eat in your room.
You should eat beyond my sight.
You should eat down the street.

You should eat inside the cave.
You should eat near the mall.
You should eat above the main floor.
You should eat next to McDonald's
You should eat on the trip.
You should eat over at Marcie's house
You should eat under my supervision.
You should eat underneath that light.
You should eat between your parents.
You should eat wherever your girlfriend wants.
You should eat where there is good food.
You should eat by Elliott.

The bull charged. how?

The bull charged carefully.
The bull charged angrily.
The bull charged with rage.
The bull charged as if the red cape were driving him crazy.
The bull charged as though he would mow down the matador.
The bull charged exactly how the crowd expected.

The bull charged fiercely.
The bull charged speedily.
The bull charged without a care in the world.

SENTENCE EXPANSION EXAMPLES – ADVERBIAL (CONTINUED) (WORDS, PHRASES, AND CLAUSES)

The infant cried. why?

The infant cried in order to get her way.

The infant cried at the loud noise.

The infant cried for no reason at all.

To get attention, the infant cried.

The infant cried until he heard his father's voice.

The infant cried in case he might be heard.

The infant cried assuming that all eyes would turn towards him.

The infant cried with the hope of getting a fresh diaper.

The infant cried without cause.

Because she was in the hot sun, the infant cried.

If his sister made scary faces, the infant cried.

The infant cried in order that he might be heard.

Since everybody ignored him, the infant cried.

The infant cried so that she could get some food.

Unless he heard his mother's voice, the infant cried.

Juan apologized. concession...

Juan apologized against his better judgment.

Despite his innocence, Juan apologized.

Juan apologized in spite of his sister's screaming.

Juan apologized although he was angry.

Though he knew Marcus was in the wrong, Juan apologized.

Even though Marcie refused to listen, Juan apologized.

While some might have considered it a weak move, Juan apologized.

SENTENCE EXPANSION EXAMPLES (CONTINUED)
(MOST ARE ADJECTIVAL; SOME ARE NOUNS)

The soldiers fought. what kind? which one? whose?

The Union soldiers fought.	The young soldiers fought.
The exhausted soldiers fought.	The disobedient soldiers fought.
The armed soldiers fought.	The camouflaged soldiers fought.
The loyal soldiers fought.	The furious soldiers fought.
The Chinese soldiers fought.	The wounded soldiers fought.
The vicious soldiers fought.	The peace-loving soldiers fought.
The dangerous soldiers fought.	The elite soldiers fought.
The younger soldiers fought.	The soldiers in blue uniforms fought.
The soldiers of Guam fought.	The soldiers in <i>Call of Duty</i> fought.
The squadron soldiers fought.	The reluctant soldiers fought.
Those soldiers fought.	The general's soldiers fought.
The soldiers over there fought.	The soldiers next to the tank fought.
Our soldiers fought.	Their soldiers fought.
The only soldiers on the field fought.	
The soldiers, brothers in their twenties, fought.	
The soldiers, proud French men, fought.	
The soldiers from behind the trees fought.	
Armed with rifles, the soldiers on the paint ball field fought.	
The soldiers who ignored their commander fought.	
The soldiers that Poland hired fought.	
The soldiers, following orders from military command, fought.	
The soldiers, who hoped for a swift victory, fought.	
The soldiers in new uniforms fought.	
The soldiers with extra free time fought.	
The soldiers, a worn out troop, fought.	
The soldiers, a proud fighting unit, fought.	

The girls rejoiced. how many?

The seven girls rejoiced.	The girls, two juniors and one senior, rejoiced.
All the girls rejoiced.	The girls, three sets of twins, rejoiced.
Some girls rejoiced.	Too few girls rejoiced.
Too few girls rejoiced.	No girls rejoiced.
No girls rejoiced.	A few girls rejoiced.
Several girls rejoiced.	Many girls rejoiced.

SENTENCE EXPANSION QUESTIONS WITH STUDENT RESPONSES

1. The ghost haunted the mansion.

when?	for hundreds of years
where?	on the corner of the deserted street
how?	by wandering the halls late into the night
why?	because her death had not been avenged
concession?	despite the fact that few people noticed her presence
what kind?	young, female
which one?	of Andrea Longhorn
how many?	<i>the (already included)</i>

2. The teams competed.

when?	twice each year
where?	at the largest stadium in Great Britain
how?	by playing their very best
why?	because their rivalry was older than any of the current players
concession?	although the Bears always won
what kind?	veteran
which one?	with well developed skills
how many?	two

3. The owner accepted the offer.

when?	at close of business on Friday
where?	in his office on the fourth floor
how?	gratefully
why?	so that he could retire a rich man
concession?	in spite of his son's desire to run the business
what kind?	selfish
which one?	of the shoe company
how many?	sole

4. barebones sentence:

when?	_____
where?	_____
how?	_____
why?	_____
concession?	_____
what kind?	_____
which one?	_____
how many?	_____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Compound Sentences

2 independent clauses:

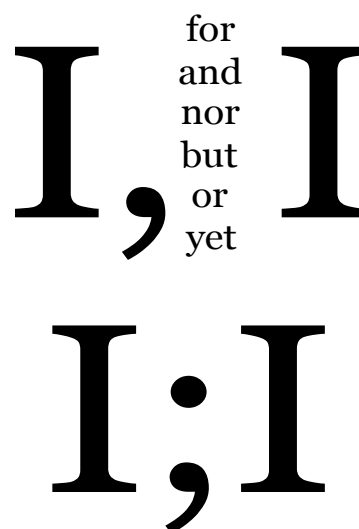
- joined by a comma (,) and conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet)
- advanced: joined by semicolon (;)

Examples:

- John went to the store, but it was closed.
- We should consider all our alternatives,
or Mary may become angry with us.
- advanced: The river swept away the bridge;
we traveled upstream in our boat.

Sentence Check:

- make sure each part of the sentence can stand by itself
- make sure the subjects are different
- make sure the sentence has a comma (,) and a conjunction (advanced: or a semicolon (;))



1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Complex Sentences

1 independent clause and 1 or more dependent clauses:

- if the dependent clause is first, use a comma
- do not use a comma if the dependent clause is last

Examples:

- Since we went to the bank, we have enough money for groceries.
- Mary and John brought a gift because it was the right thing to do.

Sentence Check:

- make sure there is one independent clause with a subject and its verb
- make sure there is one dependent clause with a subject and its verb
- check punctuation: do not use a comma if dependent clause is last

Subordinating Conjunctions:

after	as soon as	even though	once	till	where
although	as though	how	since	unless	whereas
as	because	if	so that	until	wherever
as if	before	if only	that	when	while
as long as	even if	in order that	though	whenever	

ID
D,I

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Developing Sentence Skills

Sentence Vocabulary:

subject	what's doing the action
verb	action word (or state of being)
clause	group of words with subject and its verb
independent clause	clause that can stand by itself
dependent clause	clause that cannot stand by itself
simple sentence	1 independent clause
compound sentence	2 independent clauses joined by comma (,) and f(or) a(nd) n(or) b(ut) o(r) y(et)
complex sentence	1 independent clause and 1 (or more) dependent clause(s)

Sentence Exercises:

1. Write two simple sentences. *example: Mike bought some groceries.*

a. _____

b. _____

2. Write two compound sentences.

example: Mike bought groceries, but he ran out of gas on the way home.

a. _____

b. _____

3. Write two complex sentences:

example: Because he was rushed, Mike went to the store by car.

a. _____

b. _____

TRANSITIONING FROM SENTENCE TO PARAGRAPH

Often, students learn to write a variety of different kinds of sentences effectively in isolation but do not apply that ability automatically to their paragraph work. Continued practice with writing isolated sentences is one way to aid this transition. Several useful transitional writing activities can help as well.

To move from isolated sentence writing towards paragraphs, students can write...

- sentences in isolation on topic of their own choosing.
- sentences in isolation on topic assigned by the teacher but still in their comfort zone.
- sentences in isolation about content-area topic they're studying.
- sentences that follow teacher-written sentence on topic assigned by the teacher but still in their comfort zone.
- sentences that follow teacher-written sentence about content-area topic they're studying.
- cluster of sentences (2-4 - specify number and perhaps even provide criteria) about topic of their own choosing.
- cluster of sentences (2-4 - specify number and provide criteria) about topic assigned by the teacher but still in their comfort zone.
- cluster of sentences (2-4 - specify number and provide criteria) about content-area topic.

Note: These clusters of sentences would function like mini-paragraphs -- all on the same topic, flowing from one sentence to the next, without the constraints of topic and concluding sentences.

Examples:

sentence that follows teacher-written sentence about content-area topics:

Write a compound sentence that follows this sentence: Charlotte spins messages for Wilbur into several of her morning webs.

cluster of sentences about topics assigned by teacher but still in their comfort zone:

Write three sentences about last night's soccer game. You must include a D,I (complex sentence), a sentence that starts with a prepositional phrase, and a sentence with a compound subject.

cluster of sentences about content-area topic:

Write two sentences about the start of the Civil War. Include one D,I and one compound sentence.

ADVANCED ELEMENTS

Keep these things in mind:

- We teach grammar to improve writing. If you cannot justify teaching a particular concept in terms of improving a student's writing, don't teach it.
- Expand upon students' knowledge of basic grammar to teach them more advanced structures.
- The best grammar exercises involve students writing sentences containing/practicing various grammatical concepts.

Advanced elements are listed beneath their respective parts of speech:

- | | | |
|--------------------|---|--------------------------|
| • noun | names a person, place, thing, or idea | Liz, school, tree, peace |
| • pronoun | takes the place of noun | he, she, them, us |
| gerund | verb acting as noun (verbal) | |
| (can be phrase) | <u>Skiing</u> is wonderful. I love <u>eating</u> . She found <u>swimming</u> exhausting. | |
| appositive | noun or pronoun that renames an adjacent noun or pronoun | |
| (can be phrase) | Trey, <u>my younger brother</u> , lives in Louisville, Kentucky.
<u>A dangerous woman</u> , the spy was feared by friend and foe alike.
Winston Churchill worked with F.D.R., <u>our president during World War II</u> . | |
| noun clause | clause that takes the place of a noun | |
| | I don't know <u>what you are doing</u> . <u>Wherever you want to go</u> will make me happy. | |
| • adjective | describes a noun (or pronoun) | ugly, three, blue, loud |
| participle | verb acting as adjective (verbal) | |
| (can be phrase) | <u>sleeping</u> baby <u>busted</u> lip <u>engaging</u> game <u>smoking</u> gun <u>rousing</u> speech
<u>Taking the corner at breakneck speed</u> , the cyclist just barely avoided a collision. | |
| adjective phrase | prepositional phrase that describes noun/pronoun | |
| | He was the first man <u>on the moon</u> . The book <u>of poems</u> was boring. | |
| adjective clause | clause that describes noun/pronoun (also called adjective clause) | |
| | Abraham Lincoln, <u>who worked to free the slaves</u> , was assassinated.
The mouse saw the cheese, <u>which was bait in the trap</u> . | |
| • adverb | describes a verb (adjective, or other adverb) | quickly, soon, usually |
| adverb phrase | prepositional phrase that describes verb | |
| | I slept <u>in a sleeping bag</u> at the campsite. We ate <u>at McDonald's</u> . | |
| adverb clause | clause that describes verb in another clause (usually the independent clause) | |
| | <u>When the clock strikes twelve</u> , we will arrive.
I like her <u>because she has a great sense of humor</u> . | |
| conjunctive adverb | can be used between semi-colon and comma to begin second independent clause | |
| (can be phrase) | in compound sentence
Ice cream is delicious; <u>nevertheless</u> , it is not a part of my diet.
I had a headache; <u>consequently</u> , I took some aspirin.
She is a good person; <u>at the same time</u> , she isn't thoughtful when she speaks. | |

Students often use infinitives correctly and automatically without instruction; because of this, I don't spend significant time teaching them. Avoid teaching what role they play (noun, adjective, adverb) unless it is required by an outside source.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| • infinitive | verb in to + verb form acting as something else
(verbal - can be noun, adjective, or adverb) |
| (can be phrase) | I gave the dog a bone <u>to make her happy</u> . I ate <u>to satisfy my mother</u> .
I love <u>to win</u> . The man <u>to beat</u> had better funding. |

LIST GENERATION

Purpose:

- encourages students to generate ideas
- helps students learn to group, identifying similarities/differences
- simple, straightforward technique for brainstorming prepares for everything from a paragraph to a longer essay
- non-threatening task (as spelling does not count and sentence structure is not required)
- lets the student know early on whether he/she has enough information for a paragraph/paper on the topic

Some Suggested Topics for List Writing:

(slashes represent separate list topic ideas.)

about the senses:

- things that are _____ (any color)
- things that are bright
- foods that taste bad/good
- things that make loud noises
- places where you should whisper/shout
- things that are shorter/taller than you are
- fruits/vegetables/dairy products/sweets
- things that are cold/hot
- things that are rough/smooth/soft/hard
- foods that taste sweet/bitter
- things that smell good/bad
- things that can/cannot fit in your pocket
- things that keep you warm/cool
- breakfast/lunch/dinner foods

other list topic suggestions:

- drinks
- things you can do with a potato
- rooms in a house/mansion/castle
- sports
- things to do on a sunny/rainy day
- places you'd like to visit/vacation
- things you'd buy if you had \$1,000,000
- famous people (living/dead) you'd like to meet
- favorite books/movies/stories/T.V. shows
- favorite actors/sports heroes/musicians
- things to do in _____ (town/city)
- insects/mammals/amphibians/reptiles/birds/fish
- colleges/camps you'd like to attend
- things that plug in or require electricity
- things I do before going to school/bed
- important inventions
- favorite restaurants
- musical instruments
- tools
- vehicles on land/in the air/for water
- bodies of water
- things you'd want on a deserted island
- places you would not like to visit/vacation
- people you admire
- things you can do in less than a minute
- characters in _____
- favorite places to eat
- zoo/farm/jungle animals
- good/bad animals for pets
- jobs you'd like to try for a day/week/year
- modes of transportation
- favorite video games
- things to take in your tote bag on a plane
- things to take camping/to the beach
- things that cost more than \$ _____

PARAGRAPH DEVELOPMENT EXERCISES

The following exercises are designed to reinforce the basic paragraph format and give students practice with the individual elements, especially those that may prove more difficult, such as writing topic sentences. They are presented in increasing difficulty. Some students may need to spend a great deal of time on each of the elements of the paragraph while others will internalize the structure more easily.

Basic Paragraph Structure

Topic Sentence
Supporting Sentence
Supporting Sentence
Supporting Sentence
Concluding Sentence

I. Write supporting sentences for the following topic sentences:

I have several favorite foods.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

There are several good ways to occupy your time on a rainy day.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

II. Write concluding sentences for the following supporting sentences:

1. Drinking lemonade, ice tea, and other cold drinks is one way to stay cool.
2. Turning on a fan or air conditioner drops the temperature in my house.
3. Going for a quick swim in the mid-afternoon cools me down for the rest of the day.

C.S. _____

III. Write a topic sentence for each set of supporting sentences:

T.S. _____

1. I love to play frisbee in the deep, green grass of the park.
2. There is a playground, which my little brother loves, near where I play frisbee.
3. Near the entrance of the park, they have grills where we sometimes barbecue.

C.S. The park is probably my favorite place on the weekends.

Expanding Paragraphs & Using Transition Words

Once you have practiced writing basic paragraphs and are comfortable with their format, it is time to expand. Take a five sentence, basic paragraph and add detail sentences to each supporting sentence. If you add one detail to each supporting sentence, your 5 sentence paragraph will become 8 sentences; if you add two details to each supporting sentence, your five sentence paragraph will become 11 sentences!

Expanded Paragraph:

Topic Sentence
Supporting Sentence
 2 detail sentences
Supporting Sentence
 2 detail sentences
Supporting Sentence
 2 detail sentences
Concluding Paragraph

Add detail sentences for each supporting sentence:

T.S. On a rainy day, there are several things I enjoy doing.

1. Going to the theater to catch a movie or two is a great way to pass the time.

2. I love having some extra time to enjoy playing video games.

3. Usually, I have a great book to read.

C.S. Some people find rainy days depressing, but every once in a while they can be great.

Add detail sentences for each supporting sentence:

There are several jobs I would like to try. First, I think it would be interesting to work as an architect. _____

Next, I would like to work in an ice cream parlor. _____

Finally, I think I would enjoy being a teacher. _____

I think it would be interesting to try each of these jobs before choosing a full-time career.

Topic

List of 10 Things

1.

6.

2.

7.

3.

8.

4.

9.

5.

10.

Star the 3 items you like best. Each will become a supporting sentence

Prompt

List of 6 Events

1.

4.

2.

5.

3.

6.

Star the 3 items you like best. Each will become a supporting sentence

Topic Sentence

Prompt or Story Lead

Supporting Sentence 1

Event Sentence 1

Supporting Sentence 2

Event Sentence 2

Supporting Sentence 3

Event Sentence 3

Concluding Sentence

Story End (Conclusion)

Title

Topic

Sentence

Supporting

Sentence 1

Detail

Sentences

1 & 2

Supporting

Sentence 2

Detail

Sentences

1 & 2

Supporting

Sentence 3

Detail

Sentences

1 & 2

Concluding

Sentence

KINDS OF PARAGRAPHS – PURPOSES FOR WRITING

Example

- uses examples to support the main idea or thesis
e.g., Many wonderful foods can be eaten as a snack.
- 3 (or more) examples are chosen from a larger possible group
- common uses: often used to introduce paragraph writing to younger students and those with basic skills because of its simplicity; most any subject
- e.g., Many technological inventions entered our lives in the last ten years.

Classification

- (advanced example) divides items into classes, groups, or categories
e.g., There are several wonderful kinds of vacations you can take.
- topic sentence identifies subject to be classified and gives number, name, and significance of classifications (either explicitly or implicitly)
- each supporting sentence explains one category
- usually, each category is further defined through the use of examples of items that fall into that category
- sometimes, the author compares to clarify the classifications
- common uses: science questions; other, more general questions
- e.g., Technology can be grouped into three major categories.

Reason

- explains reasons for something
e.g., There are quite a few reasons the Civil War began.
- supporting sentences each answer the question “why?”
- common uses: social studies/history and literature questions
- e.g., Technology has changed our world for the better.

Persuasion

- (a kind of reason) convinces reader to make a certain decision/choice
e.g., You should avoid smoking cigarettes at all costs.
- commands the reader to “believe me, and do it.”
- requires analysis, information, and context for the reader to form own opinion
- avoids descriptive language in favor of imperative mode
- common uses: writing/English and social studies/history questions
- e.g., You should purchase the newest computer from Apple.

Definition

- precisely explains what something is, how it looks or works, or its purpose
e.g., Friendship means something slightly different to everyone, but true friendship is recognized in times of trouble rather than times of happiness.
- answers the question, “what do you mean?”
- topic sentence identifies the subject and the focus of the definition
- meaning is found through your own experiences; quoting the dictionary is not appropriate
- may include comparisons/contrasts and examples
- common uses: government/social studies, philosophy
- e.g.,: Technology can be defined as a distraction from the real world.

Process

- gives directions or explains how to do something
e.g., Preparing to depart for school requires several careful steps.
- topic sentence identifies process to be discussed and often includes attitude towards it (e.g., efficient, inefficient, logical, cumbersome)
- usually uses concise, formal, non-descriptive vocabulary
- presents information as steps in a sequence
- reader should be able to follow independent of the author
- common uses: recipe book; procedure section of a lab report
- e.g., Upgrading the memory card on your computer is a relatively simple process.

Narrative

- (similar in structure to a process) relates a story or event
e.g., One time I found an adorable abandoned puppy in the parking lot behind my house.
- topic sentence will identify the event and signal your judgement, feelings, or thoughts about it
- should recreate story or event for readers who were not there
- sequential; usually chronological
- usually contains characters, setting, a conflict, and resolution
- contains some description, but action takes priority
- common uses: creative writing, relating a story or event in your life
- e.g., I will never forget the day we bought our first computer.

Description

- (similar in structure to a narrative) uses language to describe something the reader should imagine
e.g., The perfect dive is an incredible thing to watch.

- detailed observations
- flows directionally (from top to bottom, left to right, inside to outside, etc.)
- similar to narrative but focuses on an isolated action (verb) or sensation (adjective or adverb)
- almost always part of a larger piece of writing

Compare/ Contrast

- explains how two things are similar and/or different
e.g., While S.U.V.'s and cars both are land vehicles, they serve quite different purposes.
- topic sentence should make clear statement of why and how the two items are alike and/or different
- either tells all about one thing and then all about the other or uses points of comparison to move back and forth between the two things
- a Venn diagram is often useful for planning this style of writing
- conclusion establishes what has been learned through the comparison
- sophisticated and challenging because the author works with two, often opposing, topics in the same paragraph/essay and must use transition words that signal a change of direction
- common uses: all subjects
- e.g., The choice of whether to purchase an Apple or a PC is a difficult one.

Practice writing different kinds of topic sentences:

Write a topic sentence on the following topic for each kind of paragraph: a trip to the beach

- example: _____
- classification: _____
- reason: _____
- persuasion: _____
- process: _____
- narrative: _____
- descriptive: _____
- definition: _____
- compare/contrast: _____

Introductory Paragraphs & Thesis Statements

template for organizing introductory paragraphs

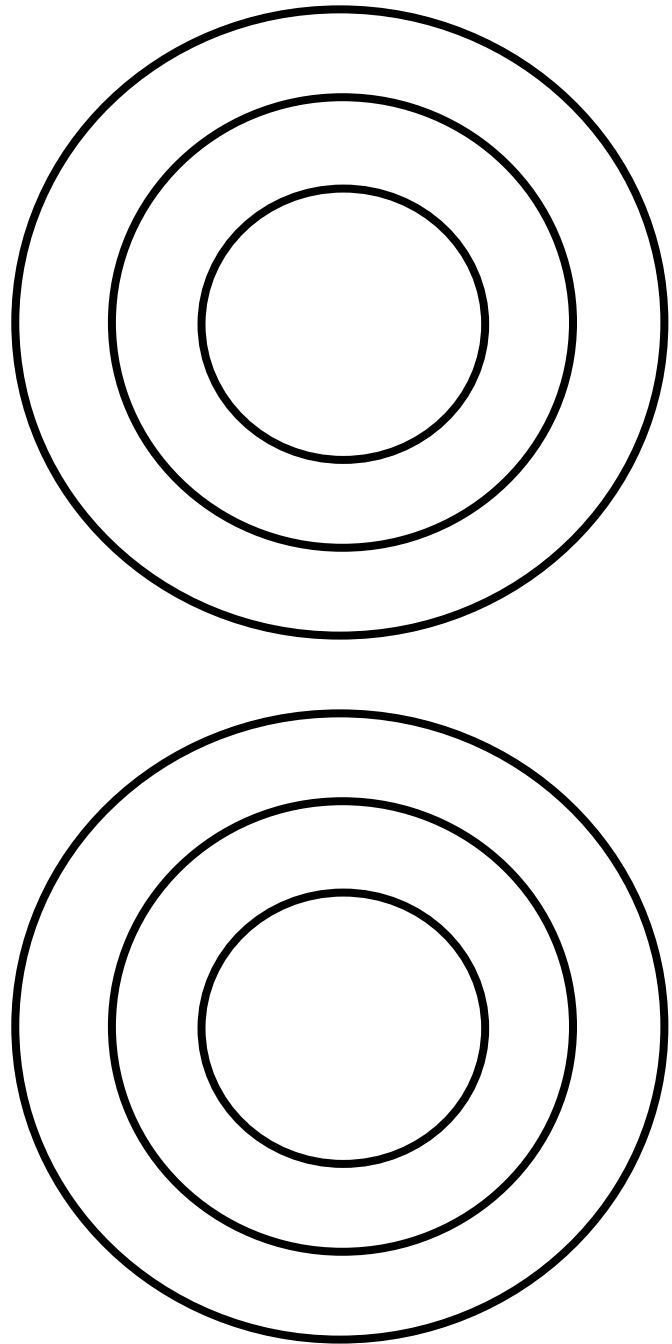
The key to good, interesting writing is the development of a thesis statement. Many students find them difficult. A vague or ill-considered thesis can lead to a paper that wanders or loses steam. Worse, the wrong thesis can lead the student to write a plot summary of a book or event rather than a true paper.

I often say the following to students: You should think of thesis statements as your own arguments. The purpose of a five paragraph essay is to introduce *your* argument (not the author's) and support it with evidence you find from the sources you have read. We use thesis statements in everyday conversations. It's often the way we communicate. We suggest something, and then we defend our suggestion. "Chicken soup is delicious" is a thesis statement. As supporting evidence, one paragraph might mention that it's good for curing colds, another might discuss the outstanding flavor, and so on. Even a simple statement such as "We should go to dinner now" is a thesis. The supporting evidence might not have to be spoken, but it is there. (We'll be late otherwise, we don't want to get in trouble, etc.)

Many of the assessments at both the national and state levels provide a prompt of some kind. Everything from the Common Core assessments to the A.C.T. and S.A.T. essay sections include a prompt. A good way to approach the introductory paragraph is as follows:

- Take a stand. (Take a position on your prompt.)
- Make a list. (List the reasons why you chose your position. These should NOT be sentences.)
- Write the fluff or introductory sentences. These sentences are more general statements about the topic and can include a restatement of the prompt but in your own words.)
- Write your thesis. (Put your position into a good sentence, which will be the *last* sentence of your introductory paragraph.) Remember the following:

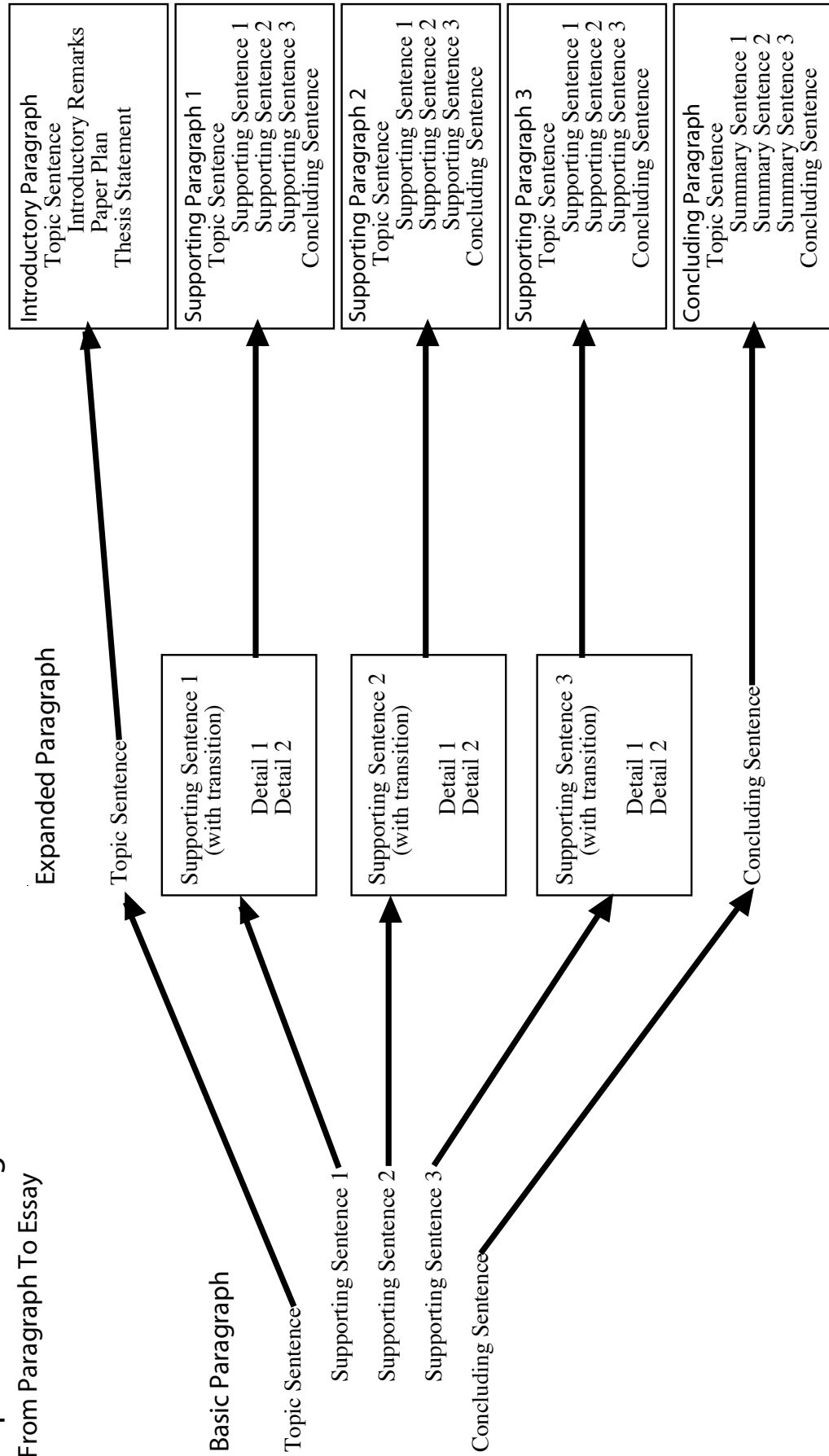
thesis = argument



Expand Your Writing: From Paragraph To Essay

Expanded Paragraph

Basic Paragraph



SOME THOUGHTS ON PROOFREADING & REVISION

When working with a student's writing, you enter into a one-to-one teaching environment immediately, without any additional work. You collect the papers and take them home, and immediately you are able to communicate directly with each student. Instant differentiated instruction! Whether your class is 3rd grade general education, 11th grade English, or a small group tutorial, you should take advantage of this opportunity whenever you have it. Even in supposedly homogenous settings, our students have different strengths and weaknesses, talents, abilities, and areas of deficit. Here, at last, is the opportunity in a group setting to address each child's needs individually.

Struggling writers, if they choose to complete an assignment at all, are used to seeing a bath of blood red ink across the page. Teachers, overwhelmed with the enormity of their tasks, often correct everything they see. Punctuation, fragments and run-ons, and subject/verb agreement are overshadowed by spelling errors for the struggling speller. "Rewrite" or "please see me" is stamped across the paper. Worse even than that, however, the student who is faced with correcting teacher-found errors has little chance of learning from the experience. Rather, he copies dutifully, sometimes making new errors, hopefully changing everything the teacher has found, and usually learning nothing from the process. If I add a comma to your sentence or change your misspelled word to the correct spelling, you learn nothing in the process of copying your paper over -- nothing but the fact that you made an error. The nature of the error, what exactly was wrong with the way you had it, and the means to find such an error in the future are lost.

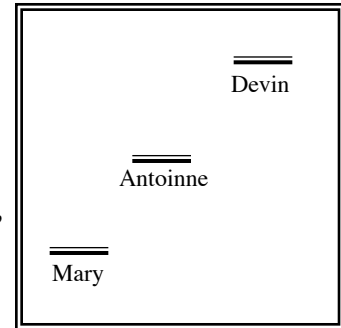
There are errors that must be corrected. Surely, if a final draft is to be posted on a bulletin board or added to a formal portfolio, glaring spelling errors must be corrected, for example. Choose your battles wisely, however: avoid overwhelming the student and empower him or her to self-correct whenever possible.

Setting Specific Goals:

Set specific, attainable goals for each student writer, and then hold your students accountable for achieving those goals. Take, for example, the hypothetical small group of Mary, Antoine, and Devin. Each has various strengths and weaknesses, but when it comes to the writing process, there are specific things on your agenda you wish each child would address above all others. Say, for example, that Mary has enormous difficulty with capitalizing the first words of her sentences and using end punctuation. Antoine repeats his nouns (instead of using pronouns) too often and overuses "fun" and "cool." Despite the fact that Devin has learned compound and complex sentences, she often does not include the commas she needs. Usually, I have several goals for each student, but for the purposes of this illustration, the hypothetical issues above will make the strategy clear.

continued

Often, students will complete a writing assignment and bring it with them from home. The teacher will say, “pull out your papers and proofread them one more time.” Some teachers have become immersed in the “peer critique” template as well. While I have often found tandem writing or peer outlining useful, asking students to proofread each other’s work, particularly when it comes to mechanics, is rarely successful. The strong writer bleeds on her partner’s paper just as you might have done, and the struggling writer fails to find anything in his partner’s writing to correct, often because his partner is a much better writer than he is. Worse yet is the situation where a partner incorrectly corrects (did you catch that?) supposed errors in his partner’s writing.



Instead, I suggest that each student has an “agenda” posted in his notebook. When my students bring in their papers, I ask them to proofread using their agendas. No one is a perfect writer, and I certainly won’t hold Mary accountable for each and every error she makes, but she is responsible for making sure her sentences are capitalized and end punctuation is in place. Antoine is only allowed to use the main noun once in each paragraph; he must change the repeating nouns into pronouns. In addition, he must remove “fun” and “cool,” instead replacing them with a word from his bank of similar words. Devin must identify whether each sentence she has written is simple, compound, or complex, and then check to see that she has used appropriate punctuation. “Proofread,” a daunting and enormous task, takes on new meaning. It becomes an active, productive experience. When I evaluate their papers, I rarely count off for spelling and other errors that are beyond their control. I do count off for those errors that are on their agendas -- errors that I have helped them to control. This gives them agency in improving their own writing. As a student grows more comfortable with items on her agenda, these items will be crossed off, and new ones will take their places.

Editing Papers:

Once the students have checked their papers against their agendas, I collect them and examine them for two kinds of errors:

- *Error which they probably would not be able to find/correct on their own:* While I leave some of these alone, I do correct the ones I deem important in pen or pencil (no red).
- *Error which I think they can find on their own with a little guidance:* I make marks in the margin to indicate these errors. If a line of text has a 2 in the margin, there are two errors the student needs to find. Sometimes, I will label a line 1s (spelling) or 1p (punctuation) to assist the student further. When he becomes skilled at locating errors using this strategy, I’ll begin to put numbers by each sentence rather than each line, making the task slightly more difficult. Ultimately, I’ll put numbers by each paragraph. This is a challenging but also empowering task for the student to complete. Once I return the papers, I provide time in class for the students to locate their errors so they verify that they’ve found the mistakes I identified. The vague, general term “proofread” becomes an achievable goal with a good chance of success. Further, the student learns much from the process of discovering her own errors.

WORKING WITH YOUNGER STUDENTS & STUDENTS WITH BASIC SKILLS

These students often find the task of writing extremely daunting. Usually, they have had little experience with writing, and the writing they have done has been marked or graded “harshly.” The trick to teaching expository writing to students with fledgling skills is to foster an enjoyment of the writing process while simultaneously advancing the student’s skills. Most of these activities can be used with students of all levels but are particularly effective for reluctant, resistant, and fledgling writers.

Often, teachers move students too quickly into paragraph writing without developing their sentence skills. Try these activities and others before moving to paragraphs:

- generating lists and coming up with topics for already written lists
- sorting nouns by kind (person/place/thing/idea; proper/improper)
- changing nouns from singular to plural and from plural back to singular
- sorting nouns by group (e.g., reptiles/mammals/amphibians; dangerous/safe jobs; things that can/cannot fit in your pocket)
- using provided nouns in complete sentences
- using capitals and applying end punctuation to already written sentences
- adding adjectives to nouns and nouns to adjectives
- adding verbs to nouns and nouns to verbs
- matching subjects to predicates
- sorting words by part of speech
- using provided introductory words to write sentences (e.g., Usually, Today, Sometimes, On Monday, In January, For dinner)
- distinguishing between complete sentences and fragments
- writing lots of sentences

As you introduce paragraph structure to students, continue to practice the activities above and also begin to teach/practice the following:

- writing compound sentences
- adding supporting sentences to topic sentences and topic sentences to supporting sentences
- adding concluding sentences to already written paragraphs
- adding independent clauses to dependent clauses

Teach paragraphs in the following order to these beginning writers:

(1) example

(2) process

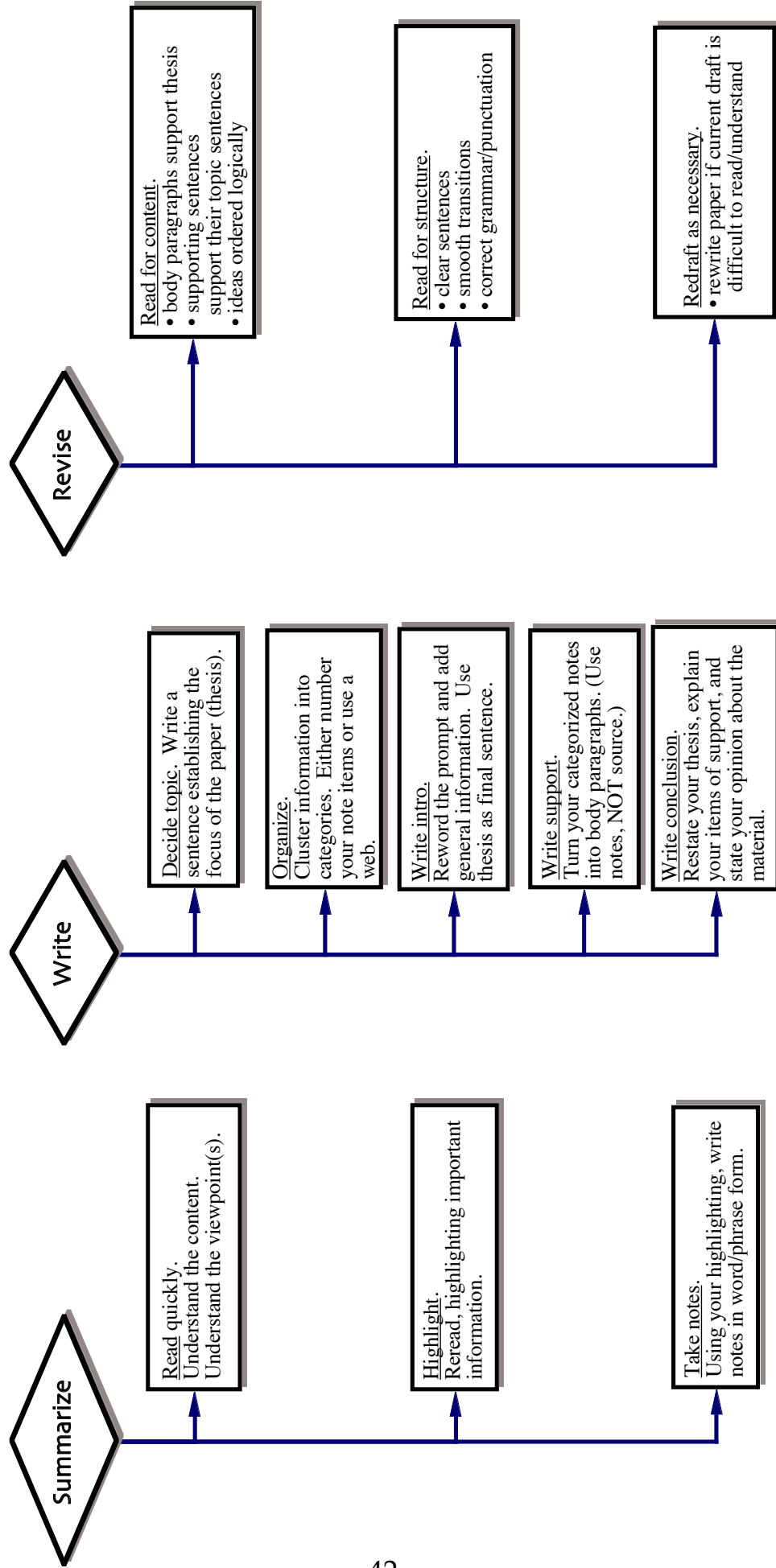
(3) reason

Avoid teaching compare/contrast paragraphs until a student reaches at least 3rd grade. With these students, develop compare/contrast skills with the following activities:

- choose two things and list their similarities
- choose two things and list their differences
- create a Venn Diagram for two things you wish to compare/contrast

Writing from Informational Text

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RESPONDING TO A PERSUASIVE/OPINION PROMPT

Take a Stand:

1. *Read the prompt carefully.* Make sure you understand it. Recognize both sides of the issue it addresses. Underline any key words.
 2. *Take a stand.* This can often be a single word -- yes or no. Which side you believe doesn't matter; choose the side you can best argue and support convincingly.
-

Make a List:

1. *Make a list of items that support your stand.* Support can come from personal experiences, information you've learned in your courses (e.g., historical events), movies you've seen, and books you've read.
 2. *The list is essential.* It allows you to get your ideas on paper and frees up working memory so you can process, organize, and write cohesively about your topic. Also, if you aren't able to generate a complete list, it's a quick indicator that you aren't prepared to argue that side of the topic.
-

Write Your Introductory Paragraph:

1. *Begin with broad, more general statements about the topic.* The most straightforward way to create the opening sentences of an essay is to reword the prompt, exploring both sides of the issue. General information about the topic can be included in the opening sentences, but this is NOT the place to give away the side you wish to argue.
 2. *Conclude the first paragraph with your thesis.* The thesis is your argument, the position you intend to take. It should be a well-developed sentence that clearly states your position. Often, it will also indicate the key ways you will support it (one for each of the upcoming supporting paragraphs).
-

Generate Supporting Paragraphs (use for each of 2-3 paragraphs):

1. *Write a topic sentence that defends your argument.* Each supporting paragraph will make a different defense of your argument.
 2. *Discount the opposition.* A strong argument often presents the other side and quickly discounts it. (e.g., While some may argue..., On the one hand..., Some think...but)
 3. *Present your evidence.* Provide support for your defense. Be specific to anchor the reader in your argument.
 4. *Conclude your paragraph.* Make sure the reader remembers the point you've made and how it ties back to your thesis.
-

Write Your Concluding Paragraph:

1. *Restate the issue under discussion.* Briefly mention both sides of the topic.
2. *Restate your position.* Discuss your side and the support you offered.
3. *Conclude with your opinion.* This is your last chance to convince the reader to support the side you took.

Conjunctions

coordinating (for compound sentences): I, fanboy I

for and nor but or yet

subordinating (for complex sentences to begin adverb clauses - grouped by purpose): D, I ID

time:

after
as
as soon as
before
just as
now that
once
since
until
when
whenever
while

cause:

as
because
since

manner:

as
as if
as though

comparison:

as
just as
than

purpose:

in order that
so that

condition:

as long as
even if
if
unless
whether

place:

where
wherever

concession:

although
even though
though
whereas
while

Relative Pronouns

(for complex sentences to begin adjective clauses):

who which that whom whose

Conjunctive Adverbs

(optional for I;I compound sentences* - grouped by meaning):

additionally

also
furthermore
likewise
moreover
similarly
in addition

however

nevertheless
nonetheless
on the contrary
on the other hand
still

accordingly

as a result
consequently
hence
therefore
thus

actually

certainly
indeed
in fact

at the same time

meanwhile
simultaneously

afterwards

later
next
subsequently
then

alternatively

instead

for example

for instance

certainly

clearly
obviously

Prepositions

concrete prepositions

(to begin prepositional phrases)

above	near to
across	next to
around	on
at	on top of
behind	onto
below	out of
beneath	outside
beside	outside of
between	over
beyond	past
by	through
close to	throughout
down	to
far from	toward
from	towards
in	under
in front of	underneath
inside	up
into	upon
near	within

advanced prepositions

(to begin prepositional phrases):

aboard	during
about	except (for)
according to	for
after	in addition to
against	in case of
ahead of	in place of
alongside	in spite of
among	instead of
amongst	of
along	off
aside from	on behalf of
atop	out
because of	prior to
before	subsequent to
besides	with
despite	with regard to
due to	without

*Use a semi-colon before and a comma after the conjunctive adverb.

Signal Words for Reading, Writing & Notetaking

Direction Change & Contrast: A change in ideas to follow.

alternatively
although
as opposed to
at the same time
but
conversely
despite (the fact that)
different from
even so
even though
for all that
however
in contrast
in spite of (the fact that)
instead
nevertheless
nonetheless
notwithstanding
on the contrary
on the other hand
or
otherwise
rather
still
though
unlike
whereas
while
yet



Addition: Similar ideas, additional support, or evidence to follow.

additionally
again
also
and
another
as an example
as well
because
besides (that)
equally important
following this further
for example
for instance
for one thing
further
furthermore
in addition
in light of the...it is easy to see
in particular
in the same vein
in the same way
just as
likewise
more (than that)
moreover
namely
next
other
pursuing this further
similarly
specifically
then
to illustrate



Conclusion, Summary & Emphasis: Conclusion, summary, or emphasis to follow.

accordingly*
after all
all in all
as a result*
because*
certainly
clearly, then*
consequently*
finally
for the reason (that)*
generally
hence*
in a word
in any event
in brief
in conclusion
in fact
in final analysis
in final consideration
in general
in short
in sum
in summary
in the end
indeed
last
lastly
naturally
of course
on account of*
on the whole
since*
so*



Sequence & Time:

after
afterwards
always
as long as
as soon as
at first
at last
at length
before
before long
currently

during
earlier
eventually
finally
first... second...
third
following
immediately
in the first place
in the meantime
later
meanwhile
never
next

now
presently
recently
shortly
simultaneously
sometimes
soon
so far
subsequently
then
this time
when
whenever
while

therefore*
thus*
to be sure
to conclude
to sum up
to summarize
truly

(* indicates cause and effect)

Note: The bent arrow signifies a change in direction while the two straight arrows represent words that continue in the same direction. The arrow on the right crosses a line to indicate an end point.

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Common Core: Highlights From Grammar Sections of the Language Standards

General Statement: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
(#’s in parentheses indicate grade levels for initial knowledge; many skills below require further development in subsequent years.)

ability to explain concepts:

- Explain the function of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in general and their functions in particular sentences. (3)
- Explain the function of conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections in general and their function in particular sentences. (5)
- Explain the function of phrases and clauses in general and their function in specific sentences. (7)

nouns/verbs:

- Use frequently occurring nouns and verbs. (K)
 - Use singular/plural nouns with matching verbs. (1)
 - Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement. (3)
- ### nouns:
- Form regular plural nouns orally. (K)
 - Use collective nouns. (2)
 - Form and use frequently occurring irregular plural nouns. (2)
 - Form and use regular/irregular plural nouns. (3)
 - Use abstract nouns. (3)

verbs:

- Use verbs to convey a sense of past/present/future. (1)
- Form and use the past tense of frequently occurring irregular verbs. (2)
- Form and use regular/irregular verbs. (2)
- Form and use the simple verb tenses. (3)
- Form and use the progressive tense. (4)
- Use modal auxiliaries. (4)
- Form and use the perfect tenses. (5)
- Use verb tense to convey various times, sequences, states, and conditions. (5)
- Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense. (5)
- Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice. (8)
- Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood. (8)

pronouns:

- Use the pronoun I. (K)
- Use reflexive pronouns. (2)
- Use personal, possessive, and indefinite pronouns. (2)
- Use relative pronouns and relative adverbs. (4)
- Ensure that pronouns are in the proper case. (6)
- Use intensive pronouns. (6)
- Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person. (6)
- Recognize and correct vague pronouns. (6)

adjectives/adverbs:

- Use frequently occurring adjectives. (1)
- Use adjectives and adverbs, and choose between them depending on what is modified. (2)
- Form and use comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs, and choose between them depending on what is to be modified. (3)
- Order adjectives within sentences according to conventional patterns. (4)
- Use a comma to separate coordinate adjectives. (7)

conjunctions:

- Use frequently occurring conjunctions. (1)
- Use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. (3)
- Use correlative conjunctions. (5)

prepositions:

- Use most frequently occurring prepositions. (K)
- Use frequently occurring prepositions. (1)
- Form and use prepositional phrases. (4)

sentence and general punctuation skills:

- Produce and expand complete sentences in shared language activities. (K)
- Produce and expand complete simple and compound declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences in response to prompts. (1)
- Produce, expand, and rearrange complete simple and compound sentences. (2)
- Produce simple, compound, and complex sentences. (3)
- Produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting inappropriate fragments and run-ons. (4)
- Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence. (4)
- Use punctuation (commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements. (6)
- Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style. (6)
- Choose among simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences to signal differing relationships among ideas. (7)
- Place phrases and clauses within a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced and dangling modifiers. (7)
- Use a semicolon (and perhaps a conjunctive adverb) to link two or more closely related independent clauses. (9-10)
- Use a colon to introduce a list or quotation. (9-10)
- Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations. (9-10)

Transitions for Paragraph Writing

Transitional Chains: Used to separate sections of a paragraph that is arranged chronologically.

first/second/third

the first/second/third reason; another reason, still another reason, yet another reason; the main/most important reason; the final/last reason

one; another; the last kind/type

generally; furthermore; finally

in the first place; also; lastly

in the first place; pursuing this further; finally

to be sure; additionally; lastly

in the first place; just in the same way; finally

basically; similarly; as well

for example/instance; another example; yet another example; the final/last example

to begin/first; also; at this point; next/then; when; finally

For opening a paragraph initially or for general use:

admittedly

assuredly

certainly

granted

no doubt

nobody denies

obviously

of course

to be sure

true

undoubtedly

unquestionably

generally speaking

in general

at this level

in this situation

Recommended Resources

Writing Matters Approach developed by William Van Cleave (available at wvced.com):

Grammar Dice. (grammar/sentence generating dice activities)
GrammarBuilder Concept Cards. (sturdy vocabulary cards including parts of speech and sentence parts for student and instructor use)
Words at Work I & II. (grammar/writing card games)
Writing Skills Sorters. (grammar/sentence sorting activity packs)
Writing Matters: Developing Sentence Skills in Students of All Ages. (reference manual with teaching approach, concepts for instruction, and sample assignments)

Writing tools by other authors carried by wvced.com:

Killgallon, Don & Jenny. *Sentence Composing*, Elementary, Middle School, and High School Books. (3 books - sentence combining and other sentence building skills)
Killgallon, Don & Jenny. *Story Grammar for Elementary School, Grammar for Middle School, Grammar for High School.* (3 books - sentence combining and other sentence building skills)
Padgett, Patricia. *Stepping Stones.* (expository writing board game)
Padgett, Patricia. *Create-A-Story.* (creative writing board game)
Padgett, Patricia. *Writing Books 1 & 2.* (workbooks involving sentence and paragraph writing)
Padgett, Patricia. *Writing Game Pack.* (grammar skills board game)
Pencil Grips. (assorted pencil grips to improve or correct pencil grasp)
Tactile Surfaces for Writing. (Brain Freeze, Gelboard, and Smart Sand)
Terry, Bonnie. *The Sentence Zone.* (sentence construction game)
Terry, Bonnie. *The Writer's Easy Reference Guide.* (sturdy and useful reference guide for students; inserts into 3-ring binder easily)

Other useful tools:

Graham, Steve, Charles A. MacArthur, and Jill Fitzgerald. *Best Practices in Writing Instruction.* guilford.com. (teacher resource)
Hacker, Diana. *A Pocket Style Manual*, 6th Edition. bedfordstmartins.com. (M.L.A. resource guide with other research information as well)
Hochman, Judith. *Basic Writing Skills.* sopriswest.com. (teacher resource)
King, Diana. *Cursive Writing Skills* (Left and Right Handed). epsbooks.com. (remedial workbooks)
King, Diana. *Keyboarding Skills.* epsbooks.com. (student book)
King, Diana. *Learning Cursive Writing Skills.* (Left-Hand and Right-Hand Lowercase Editions). dnieman@kildonan.org. (workbooks for younger students)
King, Diana. *Writing Skills*, Books A, One, Two, and Three. epsbooks.com. (workbooks involving grammar and sentence and paragraph construction)
King, Diana. *Writing Skills - Teacher's Manual.* epsbooks.com. (teacher resource)
MacArthur, Charles A., Steve Graham, & Jill Fitzgerald. *Handbook of Writing Research.* amazon.com. (teacher resource)
Mather, Nancy, Barbara J. Wendling, and Rhia Roberts. *Writing Assessment and Instruction for Students with Learning Disabilities.* josseybass.com. (teacher resource)
Morgan, Charlotte G. *When They Can't Write.* proedinc.com. (teacher resource with practice books on included CD)
Kolln, Martha and Robert Funk. *Understanding English Grammar*, 7th Ed. ablongman.com.
Poulton, Shirley. *Teach the Traits of Effective Writing.* teachthetraits.com.
Schuster, Edgar. *Sentence Mastery*, Levels A, B, and C. phoenixlearningresources.com. (workbooks focusing on sentence combining skills)

Recommended Resources (*continued*)

In support of cursive writing:

Gillingham, Anna and Bessie W. Stillman. *Remedial Training for Children with Specific Disability in Reading, Spelling and Penmanship*, Chapter 9. E.P.S.

"Handwriting Doesn't Have to be a Lost Art." *Montessori Life*. Fall '01.

King, Diana. *Writing Skills - Teacher's Manual*, Chapter 9. E.P.S.

Sheffield, Betty. "Handwriting: A Neglected Cornerstone of Literacy." *Annals of Dyslexia*. Vol. 46, '96.